

## REVIEW OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING (B.S.N)

Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code: 51.3801  
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse

### OVERVIEW

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) program at Illinois State University is housed in the Mennonite College of Nursing. The college is unique among credit-granting colleges at Illinois State in that it has no departments. Thus, all academic programs offered by the college are administered at the college level. The Mennonite College of Nursing also offers a Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.), a Post-Master’s Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate, a Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.), and a Ph.D. in Nursing. All academic programs of the college other than the D.N.P. program have been reviewed in the current program review cycle. The D.N.P. program, authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education in 2013, is scheduled for its first review on the eight-year program review cycle in 2021-2022.

To qualify for licensure in Illinois as a Registered Nurse (RN), one must complete a program of nursing study from a professional nursing education program approved by the Department of Professional Regulation and pass the national RN licensure examination (NCLEX-RN). The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) program at Illinois State University provides the classroom, laboratory, and clinical training students need to take the RN licensure examination. It provides students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills essential for providing care in the complex healthcare environment and also prepares students for graduate study in the discipline. Graduates of the program work in a variety of healthcare settings, such as hospitals, nursing homes, community centers, public health departments, schools, and long-term care facilities.

Students admitted to the B.S.N. program enroll in one of two sequences. The prelicensure sequence is designed for students who have no prior nursing training and is a traditional four-year sequence. Students who have earned a baccalaureate degree in a field other than nursing, however, qualify for an accelerated version of the prelicensure sequence that can be completed in 15 months. The RN to B.S.N. sequence serves students who have completed an associate’s degree program in nursing and who have earned RN licensure. This is a two-year sequence taught online. To promote seamless transition of students from an associate’s degree program to the RN to B.S.N. plan of study, the Mennonite College of Nursing has dual-admission partnerships with four Central Illinois community colleges that offer an associate’s degree in nursing leading to RN licensure: Heartland Community College (Normal), Illinois Central College (East Peoria), Illinois Valley Community College (Oglesby), and Parkland Community College (Champaign).

**Enrollment by Plan of Study, Fall Census Day, 2010-2017**  
**Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.), Illinois State University**  
First Majors Only

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pre-licensure sequence (four-year)	322	370	446	546	557	552	573	558
Pre-licensure sequence (accelerated option)	25	18	15	19	20	22	25	18
RN to B.S.N. sequence (two-year)	33	25	25	34	33	51	28	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>609</b>

**Degrees Conferred by Plan of Study, Graduating Fiscal Year 2010-2017\***

**Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.), Illinois State University**

First Majors Only

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pre-licensure sequence (four-year)	90	80	115	98	136	NA	141	143
Pre-licensure sequence (accelerated option)	28	25		18	14	NA	18	21
RN to B.S.N. sequence (two-year)	15	17	24	16	17	NA	18	35
Total	133	122	139	132	167	187	177	199

\* Summer, fall, and spring terms (e.g., graduating fiscal year 2017 consists of the following terms: summer 2016, fall 2016, and spring 2017)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT**

**Program goals**

Goals of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) program are to prepare nurses who are ...

- Providers of compassionate patient-centered care who demonstrate a commitment to cultural and spiritual diversity, caring, and advocacy in promoting improved health capacities for individuals, families, and communities across a continuum of care settings;
- Stewards of resources who adapt to human, financial, material, and regulatory realities to coordinate innovative, effective, quality care;
- Empathic communicators who effectively manage health information and evolving communication technologies to improve care coordination in meeting care outcomes;
- Collaborators who coordinate care activities among interprofessional members of the healthcare team to impact health outcomes of individuals, families, and communities;
- Evolving clinical thinkers who use theory, observation, evidence, leadership skills, and practice experience to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities; and
- Entry-level generalists who integrate knowledge and skills from a liberal education in applying evidence-based solutions to health issues to promote wellness for individuals, families, and communities.

**Student learning outcomes**

Student learning outcomes associated with each program goal are set forth in the learning objectives associated with each required nursing course.

**Program curriculum** (2017-2018)

Graduation requirements (prelicensure sequence, traditional):

120 credit hours including 55 credit hours of lower division courses in other disciplines and 65 credit hours of courses in the major. Included in the 55 credit hours of lower division courses are courses needed to complete General Education requirements. Eight of the nursing courses have a clinical component involving supervised experiences in off-campus healthcare settings.

Graduation requirements (prelicensure sequence, accelerated):

A bachelor's degree in a non-nursing discipline/field. 65 credit hours of nursing courses through the Mennonite College of Nursing. Eight of the nursing courses have a clinical component involving supervised experiences in an off-campus healthcare setting.

Graduation requirements (RN to B.S.N. plan of study):

Completion of a nursing program at a state-approved diploma school or an associate's degree program in nursing at a community college, RN licensure by the State of Illinois, and 65 credit hours of Mennonite College of Nursing courses. After the student has successfully completed three specified upper-division nursing courses in the college, the student receives 34 credit hours for mastering content covered in six Mennonite College of Nursing courses in courses taken at the diploma school or community college through which the student qualified for RN licensure. Two of the courses in the RN to B.S.N. sequence have a clinical component.

**Program delivery**

The prelicensure sequence is offered on the Normal campus.

Clinical experiences for students in the prelicensure sequence are held at locations throughout Central Illinois.

Most nursing courses in the prelicensure sequence are taught face-to-face; two courses are offered online, and one course is offered both face-to-face and online.

Courses in the RN to B.S.N. sequence are taught online.

**College faculty** (Fall 2017)

18 tenure track faculty members (4 Professors, 5 Associate Professors, and 9 Assistant Professors)

55 non-tenure track faculty members (18 full-time and 37 part-time, totaling 26.36 FTE)

Student to faculty ratio: 12.1

Student to tenure-line faculty ratio: 32.6

All tenure track faculty members have a doctorate. Those teaching nursing content have either a Ph.D. or a Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.). One faculty member is a doctorally-prepared statistician who teaches statistical methods and serves as the college statistician. All tenure track faculty members are expected to establish and implement a plan of scholarship. Peer-reviewed contributions by faculty members have included journal articles, presentations at regional, national, or international conferences, continuing education publications, and grant submissions, among others. In Fiscal 2017 nursing faculty members collectively received external grants totaling \$3.4 million to support research projects from Fiscal 2018 through Fiscal 2021.

All non-tenure track faculty members are expected to possess either a master's degree in nursing or a doctorate in nursing (either a D.N.P. or Ph.D.). Many non-tenure track faculty members supervise students at clinical sites, and full-time non-tenure track faculty members are active in service activities at the college and university levels.

Mennonite College of Nursing faculty members have received numerous teaching, research, and service awards bestowed by the University or by entities external to the University since the 2009-2010 program review. Among the external recognitions are a Distinguished Leader Award from the Emergency Nurses Association, Book of the Year Award from the *American Journal of Nursing*, Article of the Year Award from the *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services*, and an Innovations in Professional Nursing Education Award bestowed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing for re-design by faculty of the pediatric clinical experience in the undergraduate nursing program.

**Specialized accreditation**

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Other Mennonite College of Nursing programs accredited by CCNE include the Master of Science in Nursing (M.S.N.), the Post-Master's Family Nurse Practitioner Certificate, and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.) A reaccreditation site visit to review the four programs occurred in spring 2017. CCNE subsequently reaccredited all four programs for 10 years, the maximum period of accreditation granted by CCNE, through 2027.

### **Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand**

Nursing continues to be a very sought after career. Nearly all graduates of Mennonite College of Nursing programs obtain employment in the field. The demand for the prelicensure sequence in the B.S.N. program remains very high, with applications numbering approximately eight times the number of students that can be accommodated. In 2015 the Mennonite College of Nursing was named one of four preferred educational partners in Illinois for the nearly 37,000 associates employed by Advocate Healthcare system. That system is headquartered in Downers Grove (Illinois) and operates the Advocate BroMenn Healthcare facility in Normal. Designation as a preferred educational partner is expected to result in higher demand for the RN to B.S.N. sequence, which has the capacity to accept additional students.

### **Response to previous program review recommendations**

*Mennonite College of Nursing should continue its efforts in fiscal planning to address the imbalance between ever-growing demands for expanded programming on the one hand and limited resources on the other.* The primary factor limiting the ability of the Mennonite College of Nursing to meet the demand from prospective students for admission to the B.S.N. program is the limited number of facilities in Central Illinois through which clinical experiences can be provided to students in the program. Because clinical experiences are required for RN licensure in Illinois, reducing clock hours of clinical experiences to reduce the need for clinical sites is not an option. One approach taken by the college to help address this challenge is establishing a clinical simulation laboratory on the Illinois State University campus to reduce the clock hours of clinical experiences that need to be provided at healthcare facilities in the region. In addition, the college has prioritized growing enrollment in the RN to B.S.N. sequence, which is delivered fully online. There is capacity in that sequence to increase enrollment from approximately 30 students to 200 without the need for additional faculty or staff resources.

*Work with the Office of Enrollment Management and Academic Services to establish an optimum enrollment.* The Mennonite College of Nursing continues to work with the Office of Enrollment Management and Academic Services to establish target enrollments for all of its degree and certificate programs. The college is contributing to university efforts to maintain and grow enrollments through plans to increase enrollment in the online RN to B.S.N. sequence.

*In the planning process, Mennonite College of Nursing should prioritize program offerings in light of university and school resources and accreditation expectations.* Through implementation of its *Plan for College Assessment* (assessment and evaluation plan), the Mennonite College of Nursing reviews all of its programs on a regular basis to determine their effectiveness and their resource needs. The college also closely monitors compliance of its programs with expectations of its accreditor, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Findings from these assessments and evaluations were considered by faculty and staff as they compiled a new strategic plan to guide college academic programming over the next five years. The plan was adopted by the College Council in March 2018.

*Continue efforts to address gender and ethnic diversity within the program's student and faculty populations.* Since the 2009-2010 review of Mennonite College of Nursing programs, the college has sought and received two federal Nursing Workforce Diversity Program grants. The first grant (\$1.12 million for Fiscal 2013 through Fiscal 2015) has funded efforts to encourage junior high and high school students to consider nursing as a career option. The grant has also funded programming, scholarships, and stipends for upper-division postsecondary nursing students self-identifying with groups traditionally underrepresented in the field. The second grant (\$2 million grant for Fiscal 2018 through Fiscal 2021) is being used by the college to financially assist lower-division postsecondary nursing students and to implement holistic admissions processes in the college. These and other efforts have led to increased diversity in the B.S.N. program since the 2009-2010 program review, from 4.8 percent to 16.3 percent with respect to race/ethnicity. A longer-term goal of these efforts with respect to faculty is to create a pipeline for increasing diversity in master's-level and, in turn, doctoral-level nursing programs, to increase the pool of prospective applicants for nursing faculty positions.

## **Major findings**

Since the 2009-2010 program review, the Mennonite College of Nursing has significantly increased its contributions to meeting the growing demand in Illinois and the U.S. for highly-skilled entry-level nurses. Enrollment in the program from fall 2009 to fall 2017 increased 92 percent, from 318 to 609 students. Over the last eight years the program has graduated 1,256 nurses. The program continues to attract highly-qualified applicants. The average composite ACT score of students enrolling in the program has steadily increased since 2009, peaking at 27.3 in fall 2017. That average is nearly 4 points higher than the average across all undergraduate programs at the University. The Mennonite College of Nursing evaluates its programs on a regular basis and revises its curricula as needed to maintain programs that are current and competitive. These efforts have resulted in numerous B.S.N. program successes, including program completion rates ranging from 91 percent to 100 percent, RN licensure examination pass rates (NCLEX-RN) that exceed state and national averages, and nearly 100 percent employment rates for program graduates. Through the program review process, faculty has identified several opportunities to make the B.S.N. program even more effective at meeting student needs. Those opportunities include reducing class sizes, increasing the number of full-time faculty members in the college while decreasing the number of part-time faculty members, continuing development of innovative alternatives to off-campus clinical experiences, and devising and implementing a plan for faculty professional development.

## **Initiatives and plans**

- Decrease the size of classroom sections to provide enhanced opportunities for faculty members to implement best practices in pedagogy and to allow faculty more time for individualized attention to students.
- Determine and work toward the ideal combination of full-time and part-time faculty members that best meets students' needs while maintaining sufficient flexibility to meet course scheduling demands.
- Develop and implement innovative alternatives to traditional clinical settings and schedules to further streamline the curriculum for students and allow for modest enrollment increases. Alternatives to explore include expansion of clinical simulations in the prelicensure sequence and arranging a single clinical location for each student cohort enrolled in the accelerated option of that sequence.
- Compile and implement a professional development plan for college faculty.
- Evaluate effects of recruitment efforts, including the Preferred Provider designation by Advocate Healthcare, on enrollment in the B.S.N. program and the ability of the college to provide high-quality undergraduate nursing education.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Review Outcome.** The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) program to be in Good Standing.

The committee congratulates the Mennonite College of Nursing (hereinafter "MCN" or the "college") for reaccreditation of its B.S.N. program by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in 2017 for a 10-year period. The committee also congratulates MCN for its national award from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing in 2017 for the America's Promise School Project (see below).

The committee commends the program and college for innovation, partnerships, and collaboration in preparing highly-skilled nurses for service to residents of Illinois and beyond. Those attributes characterize numerous initiatives of the program and college since the 2009-2010 program review.

Quality clinical practice is essential to nursing education. The program maintains clinical practice partnerships with healthcare providers across Central Illinois. The committee recognizes MCN faculty for traveling throughout the state to monitor those clinical sites. Because pediatric experiences through healthcare facilities in the region are limited, MCN has developed clinical practice opportunities with children through in-school and in-home health experiences, through the America's Promise School Project. In 2011 MCN opened a nursing simulation laboratory to provide students with some clinical experiences on campus. To help grow and diversify the nursing workforce in the region, MCN has sought and received two workforce development grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services since the last program review. Funds have been used to encourage enrollment in the B.S.N.

program by students self-identifying with racial/ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented and underserved in the field. To help expose B.S.N. students to other cultures, MCN offers a Transcultural Nursing Experience, through which students travel to Russia or Brazil to experience first-hand the nursing practices there.

The college has worked with partner institutions to help nurses complete baccalaureate nursing education. In 2015 MCN introduced its Pathways initiative to streamline matriculation of nursing students through an associate's degree program at one of four community colleges in the state and then through the B.S.N. program administered by MCN. The Pathways initiative provides for dual admission to one of the four community colleges and to Illinois State University and coordination of individualized nursing plans of study at the two institutions. In fall 2017 Advocate BroMenn Medical Center in Bloomington designated Illinois State University one of its four Preferred Educational Partners. Through the Partners program, Advocate BroMenn provides financial assistance to staff members working toward a degree from MCN, including the B.S.N.

MCN and Milner Library have collaborated for many years to provide research resources and services in support of nursing students and faculty. This collaboration has been enhanced since the last program review through refinement of a tiered approach to information literacy instruction, revision of collection development policies and practices to direct more funds to digital resources, and participation by the nursing librarian on several program and curriculum committees of the college. Through the program review self-study process, the college and library have developed short-, middle-, and long-term goals to further enhance this collaboration.

The committee commends faculty members for their vigilance in monitoring the curriculum, maintaining its rigor, and engaging in scholarship that helps inform the curriculum and maintain its currency and relevance. The Plan for College Assessment adopted by the college provides for evaluation of the B.S.N. curriculum at least once every four years. Most recently, faculty modified class sizes in the program based on best practices in nursing pedagogy. Publication and presentation of research findings by nursing faculty members have steadily increased in recent years. Faculty members also dedicate considerable time to seeking external funding for scholarship or program initiatives. In Fiscal 2017 external grant awards to MCN or MCN faculty members totaled \$3.4 million.

The committee recognizes the impact these efforts have had on attracting highly skilled students who achieve at rates exceeding their peers in comparable nursing programs. Rates of student retention, participation in the University Honors program, and graduation exceed university averages and are among the highest at the University. The first-time pass rate on the nursing licensure examination (NCLEX) for students completing the program consistently exceeds the national pass rate by approximately 10 percentage points. Employment rates for students graduating from the B.S.N. program between 2014 and 2016 ranged from 94 percent to 100 percent.

The committee has included analyses of comparator and aspirational institutions in the self-study report outline to provide faculty members opportunities to consider the niche the program has among its peers and to gather information for program planning. The self-study report references two of seven comparator programs in the state but does not describe the niche of the B.S.N. program at Illinois State. The report identifies just one aspirational program. Findings from expanded analyses could help inform development of the strategic plan for the college and might help faculty identify strategies for increasing the number of registered nurses in Central Illinois who earn a baccalaureate nursing degree through the online RN to B.S.N. plan of study at Illinois State University. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to revisit their discussions of comparator and aspirational institutions and to summarize findings of those discussions in a report submitted to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2019.

The Plan for College Assessment provides for systematic and robust evaluation of program-level outcomes of the B.S.N. program through indirect assessment measures such as graduation and licensure rates. However, the plan does not explicitly identify strategies for direct assessment of student learning at various points in the curriculum. Findings from implementation of direct assessment strategies could strengthen program evaluation and, in turn, the program by helping faculty members identify the courses and assignments that might be modified to improve student learning. Accordingly, the committee asks MCN to compile and submit a plan for student learning outcomes assessment, either in the form of strategies incorporated into the Plan for College of Assessment or as a stand-alone document. Elements of the plan should include a map of learning outcomes to courses, identification of exercises or assignments used to assess learning relative to each outcome, and a process for collecting, compiling, and analyzing assessment data. The committee also encourages faculty to explore alternate means of obtaining feedback from employers of program graduates, to replace the employer survey recently ceased by the college. The committee asks

MCN to submit its student learning outcomes assessment plan for the B.S.N. program to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2019.

**Recommendations.** The Academic Planning Committee makes the following recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2025, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

**Design and implement strategies for increasing enrollment in the RN to B.S.N. plan of study.** The committee concurs with the faculty goal of increasing enrollment in the RN to B.S.N. plan of study which would, in turn, increase the number of nurses in Illinois holding a baccalaureate nursing degree. The committee believes that enrollment growth may be possible without the need for additional resources given that the plan of study has no in-facility clinical requirements and is offered online. If the newly-developed articulation agreements with four community colleges help increase enrollments in the sequence and the number of degrees conferred, the college might consider similar agreements with other community colleges in the state.

**Continue efforts to increase student diversity.** The committee commends the college for its commitment to student diversity and for its efforts since the last program review to increase that diversity. From fall 2009 to fall 2017, the percentage of B.S.N. students self-identifying with traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic groups increased from 4.8 percent to 16.3 percent. The committee encourages continuation and broadening of those efforts in the coming years. Lessons learned through implementation of the 2012 workforce development initiative might help guide the college in these efforts, while the 2017 workforce development grant might provide opportunities for the college to test student retention strategies. The committee recommends a broad approach to retention that includes coverage of diversity throughout the curriculum. The college might also consider incorporating additional community-based experiences in the curriculum, like the pediatric nursing experiences provided through the America's Promise School Project.

**Continue and broaden efforts to increase faculty diversity.** The committee commends the college for its commitment to faculty diversity and for its efforts since the last program review to increase that diversity. The committee encourages continuation and broadening of those efforts in the coming years. The committee considers faculty diversity as encompassing background, expertise, and experiences in addition to demographic factors. While the committee acknowledges the value of a pipeline approach to faculty recruitment, through which graduates of the college are encouraged to apply for faculty positions in the college, the committee encourages the college to work toward a balance between hiring MCN graduates and graduates of other institutions.

**Explore strategies for expanding the transcultural experience.** The transcultural experience offered by the program provides valuable opportunities for students to expand their exposure to the diversity of cultures they are likely to encounter throughout their nursing careers. The committee supports continuing the initiative and expanding it to additional world regions and cultures.

**Compile and implement an alumni tracking and relations plan.** The committee recognizes the numerous strategies deployed by the college to maintain connections with its graduates and to seek help from them in documenting program outcomes and identifying ways the program might be improved. Among the strategies are administration of a survey to seniors immediately prior to their graduation and texting alumni to obtain updated contact and employment information. The committee encourages the college to formalize those and other strategies through compilation of an alumni tracking and relations plan.

**Continue student learning outcomes assessment.** Beyond the work on assessment that is the subject of a requested follow-up report, the committee encourages faculty to implement the student learning outcomes assessment plan it develops for the program, utilize assessment findings to identify the need for program modifications to improve student learning, and to document modifications that are made and the rationale for them.